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Leicester, May 19. 1861.

Dear friend Webb,

I mailed a letter, (with enclosure of a shipping receipt for small parcel sent to you by Steamer of Wed. last) on Monday 13th inst., and came hither that eveg. bringing with me a large bundle of letters, & other MSS. of the late Capt. John Brown. I began the examination of them on Wed. ~~all~~ 15th inst., and have given to it all the time I could, but have finished only this p.m. The letters were far more numerous than I supposed. I have selected some thirty ~~or more~~, from which to make extracts for you; but it will not be possible for me to send ~~you~~ more than a small portion of these extracts by next Wed.'s Steamer. I shall devote to it all the time I can, but the selecting & copying cannot proceed very rapidly, with the various matters I must also attend ~~you~~ to this coming week. Moreover I doubt if I get the information from Mr. Stearns in season for this next Steamr. There is not much in J. B. letters to his wife & family wh. I shd. hesitate to copy, on acct. of its liability to betray anybody. If he wrote such letters they have been destroyed or withheld. But I presume he did not write such. He was the very embodiment of caution and of honour, on these points. In a set of Rules he drew up for an Association of coloured persons (men, women, & children), formed to resist the execution of the Fug. Sl. Law, (and in which the special parts to be taken by old & young, male & female, ~~are~~ simply & distinctly pointed out,) one is that they shall never betray, by word or sign, any of their associates, but if necessary "be hanged", & die nobly & honorably. - His own demeanour, in prison and in death, shows how perfectly he fulfilled the condition he had prescribed to others, and proves his simple-hearted sincerity when he penned it. But, in the parcel, there are letters to him, from others, which, while written very cautiously, do yet give names, and such general statements & hints, as - in the light of events now past - might possibly, if published, make trouble for some, though I am aware of nothing from which any proof cd. be drawn. But all these I think it best for me to pass by. - My extracts will be, almost exclusively, from J. B.'s own letters. I shall add a few – from his wife and children – that you may understand them all the better. – An extremely interesting family they must have been. I have enjoyed, & been very glad of, the opportunity I have had of reading over their letters, – an opp°. wh. I probably never sh^d. have had, but for your call for information on the point. I have read not only many letters of John B. himself, but a few from his wife, many from John Brown Jr, several from his sons Jason, Owen, Salmon, Watson, & Oliver, and from his daughter Ruth, wife of Henry Thompson. There is not a word of cant, from first to last, – there is not one mean, low, or narrow sentiment in the whole. Their words are not many (generally), but they are uniformly simple, unpretending, thoughtful of others, affectionate tow^ds. one another, showing generous thoughts & feelings, and kindly sympathies with the suffering everywhere when they have occasion to allude to such. – I have got my daughter Adeline to copy 2 letters for you in full, which I send herewith, and she does it gladly; One from John Brown written in 1844; – the other from his daughter Ruth, written to him in 1858, when his great undertaking was

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(evidently) supposed to be on the eve of being launched. — Two noble young men were those youngest sons of his — Watson & Oliver — hardly more than boys were they — who died at Harper's Ferry. Evidently they went into the work from a deep inward conviction & prompting; there was no inducement or influence of a sinister or unworthy nature brought to bear upon them. Doubtless they felt they couldn't bear the shame of holding back, while their father went on. — How we wish they were all alive now!

The North, as you will see, abides resolute firm. Of course you will watch closely now the American news, and read with new interest the Sta & Liberator. Read especially their selections from the leading journals, North as well as South. You will see I think, much evidence that Slavery and the Slaves a becoming a more & more important element in the Nort view of the question. The prayers of a great multitude up now continually that God will avenge His own elect; a the determined purposes of a host of hearts & hands will co- ate with all the leadings of Providence. Perilous shoals an quicksands, of compromise & bargain, are round us; but the grand

is clearly in view of nearly every eye. If our Pilots do not fail us — Slavery dies soon. In that hope: Ever Yrs, Saml. May Jr.